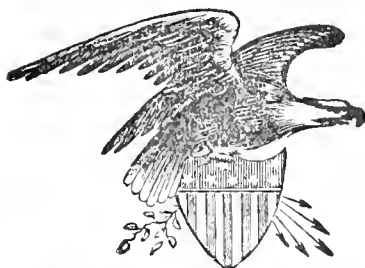


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*"We here resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—
that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of Freedom."*—
Abraham Lincoln.

DEDICATED TO THE HEROES ALL, OF THE U. S. A., IN THE
CAUSE OF THE "NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM"



"The Birth of Freedom"

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A PATRIOTIC PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By

ANTHONY J. SCHINDLER

Author and Composer of

"Old Glory," "The Bell in the Forest," "The Holy Night," "A
Grain of Salt," "For God and Our Country," etc.

PRICE, PER COPY, FIFTY CENTS

PUBLISHED BY

A. J. SCHINDLER

179 Montgomery Street, Bloomfield, N. J.

*"The day has come when America is privileged to spend her
blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happi-
ness and the peace she has treasured."*—Woodrow Wilson.

"The Birth of Freedom"

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A Patriotic Play in Three Acts

BY ANTHONY J. SCHINDLER

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROBERT ASHLEY, a wealthy manufacturer.

SIDNEY ASHLEY, the elder son.

RAY ASHLEY, the younger son.

TRUMAN SANDERS, a patriotic clerk.

DICK DARRELL, an intriguing clerk.

SANDY WALSH, the office boy.

HIRAM JENKINS, postmaster.

UNCLE RASMUS, a colored veteran.

MASON DIXON JOHNSON, a pickaninny.

CAPTAIN CRUM, U. S. A.

SI GRABBER, town constable.

JACK BATES, captain of boy scouts.

Villagers, Boy Scouts, Soldiers, etc.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Costumes

Ray, fancy scout costume, curly blonde wig.

Rasmus, faded G. A. R. uniform, white kinky wig and beard, goggles, colored make-up.

Mason, shirt waist, torn shoes, trousers and stockings, cap, black kinky wig, colored make-up.

Sandy, typical youngster, red wig and cap.

Hiram, shirt sleeves, long apron, gray wig and pointed beard.

Captain Crum, regulation uniform, U. S. A.

Grabber, officer's uniform with badge.

All the other characters modern dress, with make-up to suit the character.

Scenery

Act One. A country road or landscape. To left, store with sign, "POST OFFICE." Tree, with bench to right. Time—At the outbreak of the war.

Act Two. A counting-room or office, with desks, telephone and office furniture placed about. To left a large safe. Time—When hostilities commence.

Act Three. Scene One. Same as Act One, with tent to right, marked "RECRUITING STATION." Time—At the enlistment.

Scene Two. Same as first scene, without tent. Time—At the home-coming of the troops.

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APR -7 1919

The Birth of Freedom

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ACT ONE

Scene—A country road or landscape. To left country store with sign, "POST OFFICE." Tree with bench to right.

As curtain rises, Mason is leading Uncle Rasmus, carrying a mail-bag, towards post office.

UNC. RAS. (*Remonstrating.*) I say dere chile, go easy! Dese ole bones ob mine can't circomlocate as fast as dey used to. (*Stops, panting.*)

MASON. (*Arms a-kimbo.*) Fo' why you say dat? Shame on youse, Uncle Rasmus. (*Gesticulating.*) Didn't I seen youse de odder night dancin' a breakdown in the barn? Now tell de truff.

UNC. RAS. Look a-here, chile, don't youse try to arger wif me. I want dancin at all; I was simply limberin' up my lims case the rumatiz got into my feets, dat's wat I was doin' fo' shuah.

MASON. Well, I don' know, but if youse 'specs to get dem mails to the post office on time, you shuah has got to move along livelier. So come on get dem circleutionaries goin' a little faster.

UNC. RAS. All right, honey, I'se be a-comin'. I specs' I'll have to put in a applirication for one ob dem "Yotomobiles," and then we can locomote faster. (*Moving along slowly.*)

SIDNEY. (*Entering hurriedly from left, swinging cane.*) I say, old blackie, hand me over the mail for my dad. (*Grabs at mail-bag.*)

UNC. RAS. (*Agitated.*) Why shuah Marse Sidney youse should know better than ask me to break the rules. I am to deliber dis mail to the postmaster only, an' he will hand it to you as soon as it is sorted.

MASON. (*Indignant, pushing Sidney.*) Say, youse liver-puddin'd white trash, who's youse callin' blackie? Youse jes go 'long mindin' yor own bisness, an' not interferin' here.

SIDNEY. (*Pushing Mason aside, angrily.*) What impudence is this. I will report this matter at once to the Department. The mail is now almost an hour late, and my dad is expecting some important letters.

MASON. Yah, is dat so? Well, as long as I is 'round, youse can't interfere wid any mails or females neider. Why didn't youse inwite us in your "Fordabile" when youse passed us on the road? Then we shuah'd got here sooner. (*Pulls Rasmus towards post office.*)

SIDNEY. (*Sarcastic.*) And fine company it would be, to play chauffeur to the likes of you.

UNC. RAS. (*Reproachfully.*) My dear Marse Sidney, calm you'self. You know pride hath its fall. Youse didn't used to act that way. What am came ober youse?

SIDNEY. (*Surly.*) I need no sermons from you or any one else. I'll see the Postmaster about this.

JENKINS. (*Coming from store, listening, unobserved.*) That is not necessary, Mister Sidney. I heard your dispute and must say that Rasmus was in his rights to refuse to deliver the letters. If you will kindly step into the office I will hand you the mail as soon as it is assorted. (*All off stage except Mason, who is making faces at Sidney.*)

RAY. (*Running towards Mason.*) Hello, Mason, glad to see you. I ran away from my tutor; the old foggy is so dry. I want to romp around the fields, and I'm glad I met you.

MASON. (*Admiring Ray.*) Land sakes alive, but you looks scrumptious in that uniform. Where'd ye get it? I'se so glad youse care for me, poor, homely little nigger, and if I wa'n't 'fraid ob soilin' youse clos' I'd jes hug and squeeze you like dat. (*Imitates.*)

RAY. That's very kind of you. But tell me, how is your good behavior these days?

MASON. Why, Mister Ray, I'se 'shamed to tell you. I'se 'fraid I insulted Marse Sidney jes' a while ago. He's in the Post Office now, and I'se 'fraid I put Uncle Rasmus in troubles. I'se so sorry, but I jes couldn't help it.

RAY. Why, what has happened?

MASON. O Marse Sidney, he jes' gone and pevaricated me and Uncle Rasmus and I told him what I thought of him. He want' Uncle Rasmus to gib him his mail 'fore it got to the postmaster, and 'case he wouldn't gib it up, he done gone threatened dat he would hab him bounced out ob his job.

RAY. What? Sidney said he would do this?

MASON. Yep, Mr. Ray, dats wat he sais. And so I gibbs him a good tongue lashin' and he goes away quite angry. But here comes Uncle Rasmus now.
(*Uncle Rasmus comes towards them.*)

UNC. RAS. Why, bress you, Ray, how trim you looks and be. (*Ray runs to him.*) You be lookin' like a gallant soldier, you be.

RAY. O dear Uncle Rasmus, won't you come and sit by us, and tell us some stories about the civil war? (*Pulls him towards bench.*) Please now, sit down. (*Uncle Rasmus scated with Ray right and Mason left.*)

MASON. Yah, and don't be tellin' no ghost stories, neider, to frighten little Ray, youse hear me?

RAY. (*Taking hold of G. A. R. badge.*) Please do tell us what this badge means, and the uniform you are wearing.

UNC. RAS. (*Slowly.*) Well, to ptease you, my dears, I will do so. This is the uniform of the Grand Army of the Republic. It am worn by all the veterans of the Civil War. You shuah have heard of that war? When that great, good, and kind man, Father Abe Linculm, issued the 'Mancipation Procler-mation, this grand country of ourn was plunged in a terruble turmoil, and a awful war swept over this country in which many people was shot, killed and wounded.

RAY. O Uncle Rasmus, I think war must be something awful. Why do they fight and kill? Don't the good book tell us "Thou shall not kill"?

UNC. RAS. Yas, it do that; but war am a wisitation ob the good Lord above. When the selfish motives of the people control them; when greed, hatred and passions possess their souls, and de fear ob de Lord leaves their hearts, they turn away from their God, and He in turn also forsakes them.

MASON. I say, Uncle Rasmus, yo' shuah got a lot ob 'ligion down in the last camp meetin'.

UNC. RAS. No sonny, dem is only my recomflections. I'se gettin' along in years and my edercation were sadly neglected, but deep down in my heart a voice says to me "Put your trust in the Lord, for whatever He wills is well done."

RAY. So you have also fought in the Civil War?

UNC. RAS. Yes, dear. I fought with the No'thern army and was present at the surrender ob Gen'l Lee. I can well remember Gen'l Grant as we passed in review before him. O it was a grand sight, a great feelin', and it well repaid me for all the sufferin's and hardships endured during three years ob battle, and I'm proud indeed, that I was one ob dose that helped preserve dis Union, for you and for me.

MASON. I 'specs youse had no rumatiz dem days in your legs, case you must hab been busy dodgin' dem bullets.

UNC. RAS. Dat am right, chile. But you must excuse me now as I have some chores to do for Marse Jenkins. (*As he rises, Sidney rushes from store, observes Ray with Rasmus and Mason.*)

SIDNEY. (*Grabs Ray by arm, forcing him away.*) What do I see? Since when are you associating with that black trash? Can't you find companions amongst your own kind and color?

RAY. (*Drawing back defiantly.*) It is none of your business, Sidney, whom I choose for companions. These poor unfortunates are kind and dear to me. That is more than I can say of you.

SIDNEY. (*Angry.*) Well, I'll not have you associate with that scum, and if you won't come with me, I'll send your tutor after you, as I am in a hurry to get to the office. (*Rushes off.*)

RAY. (*Sarcastically.*) O you need not hurry to send Mr. Foggy, the tutor, as he will have a lively time finding me. (*To Mason.*) Come on, Mason, let's take a romp in the woods and look for birds'-nests. Good-bye, Uncle Rasmus; see you later. (*Both off.*)

UNC. RAS. Good-bye, deahs. (*Dejected, as he goes towards store.*) I don't knows wats come over Marse Sidney, lately. Dere shuah is somethin' gone wrong wid dat boy. He were always gay and happy; now he am cross and surly. I'se 'fraid he's keepin' bad comp'ny, or has some secret troubles; if I'se only knew wat it am I'd gladly help him.

JENKINS. (*Rushing from store.*) Hear, Uncle Rasmus: listen to the latest news from Washington. (*Agitated.*) It's terrible. (*Reads.*) "WAR IS DECLARED! President Wilson addresses the Congress. Congress acts at once. A general call for enlistment in the army and navy is issued." Quick, spread the news throughout the village.

UNC. RAS. (*Bewildered.*) War? Good Good above! War again? with all its horrors, sufferin's and heartaches!

JENKINS. (*Solemnly.*) Yes, Rasmus, the threatening cloud which has so long hung over us has at last opened it's flood-gates, and grim war is upon us in full reality, in all its dire consequences. (*Martial music is heard in distance.*)

UNC. RAS. Ah, here comes my army, my brave Boy Scouts, with your flag and my flag proudly, defiantly floatin' in the breeze. (*Enthusiastic.*) 'The flag dat nebber knew defeat and nebber will. God bless it, God bless it. (*As Boy Scouts march on stage, Rasmus reverently uncovers head as flag is borne by, then commands, "Company, halt!"*)

JACK BATES. (*Stepping forward, addressing Rasmus.*) General, we salute you.

UNC. RAS. (*All salute.*) Comp'ny, 'tention! His honor, the postmaster, will now address you.

JENKINS. (*Stepping forward.*) My dear boys, I have something serious to tell you. I have just received a dispatch from Washington. Our country has entered into the terrible world war, which is now ravaging and devastating almost the entire world. War has been declared. The President is calling for volunteers and is urging us to support him to our utmost in this time of dire distress. I therefore ask you to accompany Uncle Rasmus, your general, throughout the village and make known to every inhabitant that war has been declared.

SCOUTS. (*All shout with enthusiasm.*) That we will. Hurrah for our flag! Hurrah for our country!

UNC. RAS. Comp'ny 'tention! Yo' shuah mus' be proud ob the honor to receive and execute de first orders issued in dis war by your commander-in-chief, President Wilson; but befo' we'se percede, let us pledge anew our Allegiance to the Flag. (*All recite the pledge.*)

"PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE."

(Right hand lifted, palm downward, to a line with the forehead and close to it; standing thus, all repeat together slowly :

"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands; One Nation, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All."

(At the conclusion of the pledge, a chorus, behind the scenes, sings the "Star-Spangled Banner," in which the audience be requested to join. At finish of song, Rasmus fervently kisses flag and commands: "Forward, march!" and to the tune of the fifes and drums the boys march off as the curtain drops slowly.

ACT TWO

Scene—A counting-room, or office; desks and furniture placed about; bookcase, safe, and telephone. Doors right and left marked "Entrance" and "Private."

As curtain rises, Sandy is putting office in order, dusting and arranging desks.

SANDY. (*Yawning.*) O, gee, dis office-boy bisness aint what it's cracked up to be. I'm first on the job in the morning, and the last to quit in the evening, and I'm on the jump all day long. Well, that being as it may, there is no rest for the wicked, as the saying goes, so what's the difference. (*Telephone rings.*) O pshaw, dere goes dem bells again. Dats de thoid time dis morn-ing. It makes me tired. (*Answering phone.*) Hello—Hello—Hello—Hell— what's dat? Yes, that's me, who are you? O—your central? How are you, Mabel? What?—sassy fellow? O, I don't know—no, I'm Sandy—yes, the chief clerk—yes, willin' to be. What d'ye want? Who?—What?—When?—Where?—How? O say, Mabel, have a heart, dry up!—Impertinent? What? Ring off? O, ring off your neck—so long. (*Hangs up receiver.*) Dem telephone operators gets on my noives. (*Resumes duties.*) O pshaw, hard work ain't easy, dat's all I've got to say; an' just think, to-day the Orioles and Blue Jays plays the last ball game of the season, an' me cooped up here with no chanct of seein' the finish. (*Despairingly.*) O why wasn't I born rich instead of good looking? (*Knock at door.*) For the love of Mike, vis-itors so early in the morning, with none of the office staff arrived yet. Well, I do declare; business must be rushin' by the door. (*Opens door and Mason enters timidly.*)

MASON. 'Scuse me, sah. Kin I'se see Marse Sidney?

SANDY. No, Smoke, you'se can't, bekase the gentleman hasn't arrived yet. What d'ye want to see him about? I'm his confiding secretary.

MASON. O, I'se jess come to 'pologize.

SANDY. 'Pologize, for what?

MASON. O, I jess want to 'pologize for somefink.

SANDY. G'wan run along, Snowball; 'pologize to your granny.

MASON. (*Running towards door, shouting back.*) All right, you'se red-headed creampuff, I'se will call later to see him. 'Ta-ta. (*Off.*)

SANDY. Well, of all the noive, that kid takes the goat. I'll knock his block off if he shows up here again. (*Sits at desk, with feet upon it; takes cigarette from pocket and is about to light it, as Truman enters.*)

TRUMAN. (*Pleasantly.*) Good morning, Mr. Walsh, how are you this beautiful morning? (*Removes hat and coat to wardrobe.*)

SANDY. (*Perplexed, hiding cigarette.*) Why—er—good morning, Mr. Sanders. I'm quite well; just a little fat-i-gued, but nothing much serious.

TRUM. (*Smiling, busying himself at desk.*) O you'll get over that in the course of the day. A little spring fever, that's all. You need a tonic; that will fix you up.

SANDY. (*Sighing.*) Yes, I guess I do. (*Goes towards private office, duster in hand... Aside.*) Game called at 2:30—double-header, too. Ah, what's de use of livin', anyway? (*Exits, private office.*)

TRUM. (*Looking at newspaper.*) Things are looking very serious indeed. It is my opinion that if our country wants to uphold its dignity and honor, we shall be compelled to enter the world war. The demands and protests of our President are being ignored and treated with contempt. (*Dick enters unobserved, listening.*) It is our bounden duty to act firmly, intelligently, and with determination, and show the foreign despots that this country must be respected, the wrongs righted, its every demand complied with, or this great nation of ours will rise as a man in righteous wrath to enforce it with all its might and power.

DICK. (*Smiling.*) Why, good morning, Mr. Sanders; I was listening to your outburst of enthusiasm, and admire your patriotism. I am as good a patriot as the next fellow, but my patriotism don't enthuse me to the extent that I care to don a uniform or shoulder a gun for it. That's all bosh; we don't want war and we don't need it. Let the foreigners fight their own battles, and let the U. S. A. mind their own business, that's my idea.

TRUM. (*Surprised.*) Why, Darrell, I am surprised to hear you talk that way. Patriotism, as you define it, is only skin deep, like a coat of veneer. It does not come from the heart, nor does it go to the heart. It's all on the surface. In these trying times, in this terrible crisis which confronts us, we must all be true and loyal citizens, ready to shed our blood for our country, aye, if needs be, make the supreme sacrifice for the glorious flag that protects and shelters both you and me.

SIDNEY. (*Enters hurriedly, excitedly.*) It's come at last, boys. This accursed war which has engulfed almost the entire universe has reached our shores. War has been declared!

TRUM., DICK. (*Together, anxious.*) War declared? When?

SIDNEY. Dispatches have just been received from Washington, and the news is being circulated throughout the town.

TRUM. So it has come at last; 'twas bound to come. There was no other course left for us, and now that we are in it, we will make the best of it, and bring it to a speedy and glorious finish, and so make the world safe for liberty and democracy for all time to come.

SIDNEY. (*Sarcastic.*) So say *you*, and how are *we* going to do it?

TRUM. Do it? Why, you surprise me, Mr. Ashley. Do it? There is only one way, and that is that each one of us does his part, to his very utmost, to reach the one and only goal, and that is, to win the war, regardless of any sacrifices, of any personal considerations.

DICK. O you'd make a fine Fourth of July orator; lots of patriotic bombshells, followed by enthusiastic applause, and, bowing, retire with a smiling countenance.

TRUM. (*Angrily.*) I resent being reproved in this manner by you, Mr. Darrell. (*Mr. Ashley enters unobserved, listening.*) I can only meet this insult by declaring here, openly before you all, that I shall consider it an honor and distinction to be among the first to answer my country's call, and to prove what I say (*goes to wardrobe and dons hat and coat*), I am going *now*, to enlist in the army, and as for you, Dick Darrell, if you have a spark of manhood, of patriotism, left in your puny heart, I defy you to do likewise.

DICK. (*Fiercely.*) This is worse than an insult, Sanders, and I know how to resent it. (*Is about to remove his coat to attack Sanders, as Ashley steps calmly forward, saying:*)

ASHLEY. Good morning, gentlemen. Quite an unusual occurrence in this office, I hope. If you have any battles to fight, you will have plenty of opportunity on the fields of Flanders, without desecrating this office. (*All look abashed.*) Mr. Sanders, you will please come to my office, as I need your services. (*Ashley and Sanders exit to office.*)

DICK. (*Scowling and raging.*) The impudent pup! I'll square accounts with him some day, never fear. Dick Darrell never forgets.

SIDNEY. (*Soothingly.*) Calm yourself, Dick; you are beside yourself. You know that Sanders is very sensitive, and you should not have provoked him. Forget it, boy, forget it.

DICK. Forget it? No. I never forget. I have a score to settle against Truman Sanders, and he shall pay for it in full, mark my words.

SANDY. (*Enters from office.*) I'm going to the post office, with some mail for the governor, and if you have any I'll take it on my way.

SIDNEY. No, Sandy, we have nothing for you.

SANDY. (*As he leaves.*) Very well, gentlemen, I'll be back shortly. (*Off.*)

SIDNEY. (*Telephone rings, Sidney answers.*) Hello, what's that? Ironsides Railroad stocks dropped twenty points? Good God, that wipes me out—Yes?—Send you collateral for the stock?—Why, man, I'm completely wiped out, I can't do it. (*Hangs up receiver.*) Some news, Dick, from the Stock Exchange. The Ironsides stock has tumbled, the bottom has dropped out. What can we do? I'm disgraced. I'm ruined. O this damnable war.

DICK. (*Sneeringly.*) Why, make the best of it, Sid. Never say die. We'll find a way out of it, or you can call me a duffer.

SIDNEY. But I have gone into this gambling business too far. I cannot retrench.

and my funds are exhausted. There's only one thing left for me to do, and that is to make a clean breast of it, to tell dad all, and ask his forgiveness.

DICK. If you are so inclined, well and good. But how do you suppose your pa will feel about it? What will he think of his darling boy cutting up such capers behind his back? You know his sense for rectitude and justice, and I, for one, should not like to be in your boots, facing him with a confession.

SIDNEY. I know it, Dick. I dread to do it, but there is no other way out of it. (*Goes towards private office as door opens and Ashley and Truman enter, conversing.*)

TRUM. I am fully resolved to enlist, Mr. Ashley, and nothing can deter me.

ASHLEY. Not even your mother? Have you consulted her, have you thought of her probable plight during your absence?

TRUM. My dear mother is my chum. I have often discussed this emergency with her. She is ready to make the sacrifice with me. I have laid sufficient funds aside, from my earnings, to keep her from want for some time to come, and for the rest, we will trust in the good God above. On my way to the recruiting office, I shall also stop at the bank and deposit my earnings, in my mother's name, so that she will be provided for in my absence.

DICK. (*Aside to Sidney.*) I've got it. I'll help you and at the same time get my revenge on Truman. (*They both go off to private office.*)

ASHLEY. Very well, Truman. (*Taking his hand.*) I admire your noble spirit. If I cannot dissuade you from your noble purpose, let me at least extend to you my best wishes. (*Goes into private office.*)

TRUM. (*Seated at desk, meditating.*) Well, it's done at last; the die is cast for victory and democracy. Whether I survive or my bones lie withering in the sands of Flanders, what care I? It must be a glorious death, indeed, to die for one's country, to die in the cause of humanity and justice, and, should I survive, oh, the glory of it! (*Head bowed down on desk.*)

MASON. (*Opens door cautiously, peering in and retreating, repeatedly.*) I'se jess wonder wedder de coast am clear. (*Looking around, on tip-toe.*) Fo' shuah dat man am 'sleep at his post. (*Goes up to Truman.*) I says, Mister (*Truman starts up*), is youse been out all night, and part ob de mornin'? (*Recognizes Truman.*) O 'scuse me, Marse Truman, I'se didn't know it was youse.

TRUM. Why, hello, Mason, what brings you here so early in the morning?

MASON. (*Hesitating.*) Why, outside my feets, I comes to 'pologize to Marse Sidney.

TRUM. 'Pologize to Mr. Sidney? Why, how's that?

MASON. O Marse Truman, dat am a long story. Have Marse Sidney got in yet?

TRUM. Why, yes, Mason, he is in the private office now. Won't you take a seat?

MASON. I'se 'feared ob dat Sandy clerk what am 'round here. He jes done gone said dat he'd knock my block off w'en he katches me 'round here agin.

TRUM. (*Laughing.*) Is that so? Well, then you had better hide behind that safe over there, and you can watch both Sidney and Sandy as they come in.

MASON. All right, Marse Truman, thank you. I'se got to 'pologize to Marse Sidney, case Uncle Rasmus says I was too gumbrashus.

TRUM. Very well, Mason, you just hang around. Mr. Sidney will come out of the office presently. I am off to enlist in the army and will be back shortly.

MASON. Wa-wa-wats that? 'nlist in de army? Fo' shuah youse aint don gone to get shooted all up, such a nice kind gemblemans as youse be? Why don Marse Sidney 'list? He won't be mist. He am a mean cantank'rour indervidual, dats wat he am—oh, excuse me, Marse Truman, I'se forgotten myself again. I come to 'pologize, and onet am shuah 'nuff.

TRUM. O never mind, Mason, just you hang around and you'll get your chance to apologize. (*Off.*)

MASON. (*Slowly retreating towards safe.*) By golly, now, wat youse tink ob dat?—an' he such a nice gemmen, too, wif a nice ole mudder wat will be cryin' her eyes out, too. My—my—dis am shuahly aggravashuning! (*Hides behind safe as Dick and Sidney enter, excitedly.*)

DICK. I tell you, Sidney, I have the whole thing planned out. Truman is off to

enlist; he will not be in our way to check us, and it will be an easy matter to falsify—I mean correct—some of his entries to suit our convenience.

SIDNEY. (*Aghast.*) Why, Dick, you do not propose to commit forgery to help me out, and put the guilt on an innocent person? I'll not stand for it. I still have a spark of honor left in me.

DICK. But, Sidney, listen——

SIDNEY. No, no. I'll not listen. Let me hear no more.

DICK. Why, Sidney, you don't understand me. Nobody will be the wiser. (*Mason peers cautiously from behind safe, listening.*) You understand what Truman's enlistment means? Will he survive this terrible carnage on the other side? And even if he does, it will be a long time before he will be back again. You know that the bottom of Ironsides stock has dropped out and you will have to make good.

SIDNEY. (*Faltering.*) But, Dick, think of it! Forgery, embezzlement!

DICK. Yes, I know, they are hard words; so are disgrace and contempt. Look here, Sidney, it is only for the time being, to tide us over to meet our obligations. A loan, if we may so call it; besides, you will come in for it some day by sharing in the estate, so where is the harm? A thousand, more or less, what will that amount to? Consider it as a loan.

SIDNEY. (*Wavering.*) You tempt me sorely, Dick, and I would fain accede to your rascality, but I cannot bring myself to do it.

DICK. (*Coaxingly.*) O pshaw, put aside your petty scruples. I can easily alter one of the entries on the ledger, so that the cash on hand will balance, notwithstanding that we extract a thousand dollars from the money in the safe. As long as we run the office, and not have that prowling Truman around, we can cover up our tracks. In the meantime we can take another flier. The stock market is low and panicky, and as soon as the war activities are in full swing, the market is sure to rise. Then we can recoup our losses and make good this loan.

SIDNEY. You certainly are my evil genius, Dick. Your plan seems feasible, and to avoid the disgrace which must follow my exposure, I'll have to submit to your proposal, base as it may be.

DICK. (*Confidingly.*) Oh, it don't take much to overcome one's scruples, especially if you have the chance to get even with an insulting, slandering prig like Truman. (*Goes towards safe.*) Well, what say you?

SIDNEY. (*Looking around furtively, despairingly.*) What can I say? Go ahead and do your dirty work, but I cannot bear witness to it. (*Turns back to Dick, who cautiously opens safe, extracts a bundle of banknotes therefrom and tucks them into his pocket.*)

SIDNEY. (*Turns around suddenly, shouting.*) Wait, Dick, don't do it. No, no!

DICK. (*Laughing.*) Too late, Sidney; the deed is done; forget it. I'm off to our bankers to meet our obligations. (*Exits hastily.*)

SIDNEY. (*Sinks down at desk, with drooping head, muttering.*) My God, has it come to this? A thief and a forger? (*Sobbing.*)

MASON. (*Who has been cautiously peering from behind safe, witnessing the looting by Dick, comes slowly towards Sidney, saying, timidly.*) I'se come to 'pologize, Marse Sidney.

SIDNEY. (*Starts up, trembling.*) Where do you come from? What do you want?

MASON. Uncle Rasmus done gone and sent me to 'pologize.

SIDNEY. (*Enraged, grabs hold of Mason, shaking him.*) Tell me, how long have you been here?

MASON. (*Stammering.*) Why, I'se been here before, an' now I'se here again, 'kase I wants to 'pologize. (*Trembling.*)

SIDNEY. How long have you been in here, how did you get in?

MASON. Why, I jes naturally comes in by the door, jes now.

SIDNEY. (*Shaking Mason.*) You lie, you black imp! I did not hear you enter.

MASON. (*Shifting uneasily.*) O dat's bekase youse was sitting at the desk wif youse head bowed down, sayin' your prayers like, in deep reflecshums and medimtations, like. Uncle Rasmus sends me to 'pologize to youse for bein' so comflunctions to youse dis mornin'. I axes you pahdon, hope I may nebber die, yours truly, cross my heart.

"For God And Our Country."

Con spiritoso.

Words and Music by
ANTHONY J. SCHINDLER.

Piano.

Ben marcato.

Re spond-ing to our Coun-try's call, We an-swer read-i-y one and all; To —
Tho' far 'from home and friends so dear, There's One who watch-es ev-er near; As we

fight for jus-tice and hu-man-i-ty, For — free-dom right-eous-ness and lib-er-ty. No
face the foe with shot and shell a-round, And — say a pray'r that we may hold our ground, That

mal-ice, ha-tred, scorn or greed, Im-pels our hearts to val-i-ant deed. We are
peace, tran-quil-li-ty may reign The wide world o-ver soon a-gain. In the

bat-tling for our flag o'er land and sea, For the World's De-moc-ra-cy. As we
God of Might, of Jus-tice and of Right, We will place our Des-ti-ny.

march a-long Stout of heart, full of hope, ne'er flinch-ing, With glad-some song, And with

Full Military Band, 50 Cents.

Pa-ters and A-ves ming - ling To do or die For our coun-try's ur - gent

call - ing, And we an-swer with all might and main, For God! For our Homes! And our Dear Coun-try!

Chorus.

And we march on! - march on! - With the Cross and the Star-ry Ban-ner lead - ing, March

on! march on! Hear the bu-gles call-ing and drums beat - ing; March on! march

on! To do bat-tle for our rights tho' hearts are bleed - ing We'll be loy-al true and brave, Tho' we

share the sol-diers grave, And de - fend our glori-ous flag on land or sea. sea.

cresc.

ff

D.C. Intro.

8va

A copy of this song, full sheet music size, will be sent for 25 cents.

SIDNEY. (*Aside, flustered.*) There's something wrong here. If that brat should have heard and seen what was going on here—(to Mason, threateningly.) Listen to me, you blackguard, if you are lying to me, I'll choke the dirty black breath out of your throat.

MASON. (*Crouching.*) Hones', Marse Sidney, I'se done heard and seen nothin'.

SIDNEY. (*Raging, grabs at Mason's throat, slowly strangling him.*) If you have and dare utter a word about it to a living soul, I'll strangle you as I would a black dog.

MASON. (*Gasping for breath, faintly.*) O please—don't—choke—me. You—hurt—me. (*Falls exhausted to the floor.*) Help! help! help!

ASHLEY. (*Rushes from office, confronts Sidney, who is stooping over Mason.*) What means this, Sidney? What are you about to do?

SIDNEY. (*Rises, starts back, dazed.*) Why—dad—I don't know—what's come over me, I—lost control of myself—(*staggers*)—the war—the war—it's got on—my—nerves. (*Drops in chair at desk.*)

ASHLEY. (*Goes to Sidney, alarmed.*) Why, boy, what is the matter? You must be ill. I'll call up the doctor at once. (*Goes towards 'phone as Ray rushes in.*)

RAY. Hello, daddy, I came to show you my new uniform; isn't it lovely? (*Sees Mason on floor.*) Why, look who's here. Hello, Mason, why are you so quiet? (*Tries to raise him.*) Come, sit up and talk to me. (*Rests Mason's head on his knee.*) What's the trouble?

MASON. (*Bewildered.*) O nuthin much, Ray. I'se down and out. Take me (*feebly*) home—to—Uncle Rasmus; please—do.

ASHLEY. (*Raises up Mason from floor.*) Tell me, child—tell me all that's happened; don't be afraid.

MASON. (*Coming to, slowly.*) O nuthin much, Marse Ashley; we jess had a frenly sparrin match, Marse Sidney and me (*feebly*), an. I went—down—on—the—mat—in—de—first—round, dat's all (*falls fainting in Ray's arms.*)

ASHLEY. (*Goes to Sidney, putting hand on his shoulder, gravely shaking head, saying:*) My boy, what is the meaning of all this? (*Curtain descends slowly.*)

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT THREE—First Scene

Scene—Same as first act, with tent to right bearing sign "RECRUITING STATION." Outside of tent small writing table and chair.

As curtain rises, villagers are passing to and fro, gazing with awe at Guards who are patrolling. Hiram comes from store, followed by Captain Crum.

HIRAM. I hope, my dear Captain, that you will be comfortable during your stay here. If there is anything further that we can do for you, just command us.

C. CRUM. Thank you, my dear Mr. Jenkins; we certainly appreciate your kindness, and are more than pleased with your hospitality. I shall retire to my tent to make ready for the enlistment at once. (*Retires to tent.*)

HIRAM. Very well, Captain, I am yours at command. And now, let our brave sons come forward and enroll under the sheltering folds of our glorious banner.

RASMUS. (*Coming from store.*) Too bad, that I'se can't enlist with the boys as I'se done in sixty. (*As guard passes, he salutes.*)

HIRAM. Yes, Rasmus, we are not as young as we used to be, and I'm afraid our fighting days are over. (*Off.*)

RASMUS. Yas, we'se ain't as spry as we used to be, neither. O how I would like to be young again, to fight for my country, to fight for my flag, but it kain't be did. I must be on my way, now; but first I'll call on de captain and pay my respec's. (*Goes towards tent, as Captain Crum emerges.*) Captain, I'se salute you. I'se ready for orders. Ef I kin be ob service to you, at any time, you'se will find Rasmus ready. (*Bows.*)

C. CRUM. Very kind of you, my dear Rasmus, I assure you. You may take this message to Mr. Robert Ashley; there is no reply required. (*Hands letter to Rasmus.*)

RASMUS. I'se shall deliber it directly, Captain. (*Salutes and goes off.*)

C. CRUM. (*Arranges paper and writing material on desk.*) So, now we are ready for the enlistment. (*Seated.*) I have every reason to believe that this district will show a fair quota of recruits.

TRUM. (*Enters briskly, goes to tent.*) I beg your pardon, Captain, if I am intruding. I come to enlist in the army for the duration of the war, and if I am not too previous, I should like to enlist now.

C. CRUM. (*Warmly.*) Why, we will be glad to have you, young man. It's an honor to offer one's services to his country in time of need, and you should be proud of the fact that you are the first volunteer from this district. I congratulate you. From all appearances, I think you will pass the mark. Step inside and your application will be duly registered. (*Truman enters tent, and in the meanwhile the Boy Scouts march on stage, with fifes and drums, and a number of young men following to enlist. They are lined up by the guards, and each in turn enters the tent to enrol. During this time the song, "For God and Our Country," is sung by the Scouts and chorus, behind the scenes. The enlisted men, after having registered, line up to one side, and are escorted off stage by the guards, followed by the Scouts, singing the refrain, "March On!"*)

DICK. (*Enters left, watching procession retreating.*) Well, I be blowed! Things are certainly coming my way. There goes Truman, heading the volunteers, just as he boasted to do, and I basking in the sunshine of his absence. A great world this is, indeed: what's one's loss is the other's gain. Well, I should worry. I've straightened out Sidney's tangle, and incidentally helped out myself. So what's the use? I'm on easy street, now. (*Crosses to right, when Rasmus and Ray appear, leading Mason, almost exhausted.*)

RAY. Just a few steps more, my brave little fellow, and you will be safely at home.

RASMUS. Yas, Mason, mind Ray. He am youse guardian angel. He'll bring youse home safely.

MASON. (*Feebly.*) O my pore li'l head—it am swimmin' round' like a top. Take me home, please—put me in my li'l bed.

RASMUS. Calm yuself, my boy, youse am at home now, and Marse Ashley hab sent fo' the doctor. He will come to see you and make youse well again.

MASON. (*Observes Dick, startled.*) O Uncle Rasmus—dat am de man! Take—him—away—he am—a—thief—a forger—I know—it—I'se seen him wid my own li'l eyes. O Ray—he ruined youse brudder, Sidney, an' youse brudder 'most—killed—— O—my—head—— (*Swoons away.*)

DICK. (*Stepping forward.*) What's all this foolish talk about?

RASMUS. O Marse, the poor little boy am delir'us. I'se 'fraid he's took with brain-fever. We'se jess taking him home an' de doctor is comin' to see him. Don't mind his talk, he am ramblin'.

DICK. O that's all right, Rasmus. Let me help you carry him to his home. (*Rasmus and Dick carry off Mason, left.*)

RAY. I cannot understand the meaning of all this. My brother Sidney and Mason taken ill at the same time, and in the same manner, and Mason accusing Dick of being a thief and forger, and ruining Sidney. I must go and see daddy and tell him all about it. Perhaps he will know what it means.

DICK. (*Returning.*) That won't be necessary, Ray. Mason is down with a high fever, and is not responsible for what he says. I'm going to the office, and if you will come with me I can drop you off at your house.

RAY. All right. I'll be with you. (*Both off. Captain enters from tent.*)

HIRAM. (*Comes from store, goes up to Captain.*) My dear Captain, are you satisfied with the enlistment so far?

CAPT. C. I am more than gratified, my dear Mr. Jenkins. This community has responded nobly to the call, and I have every reason to believe, judging from appearance and character, that every one of the candidates will successfully pass the final examination. They are, one and all, fine specimens of manhood.

HIRAM. I am proud of that, my dear Captain, proud of my fellow citizens, and I know that every one of them will give a good account of himself.

CAPT. C. (*Drums heard in distance.*) Here they come, ready for the camp,

ready to be mustered in. (*Truman, with the enlisted men, march on stage carrying small handbags, accompanied by guards, Scouts and relatives, who are marching with them. They halt in centre of stage.*)

HIRAM. (*Addressing them.*) My dear friends, you are now about to take leave from all who are near and dear to you. It is truly an inspiring moment, notwithstanding that our hearts are sad and heavy. You came forward to answer your country's call, ready to make every sacrifice, even the supreme sacrifice if that be your lot. While you are away, fighting our battles, our thoughts will constantly be with you, and our prayers will ever be for you. God speed you all, God bless you all. (*Mid hand-shakings and leave-takings, the command is given to fall in line, "Forward, march!" and to the strains of the song, "For God and Our Country," in which all join in, the recruits march off, amid cheering and waving of flags, as curtain drops.*)

Second Scene

Scenery same as first scene, with tent removed.

Hiram and Rasmus, assisted by Boy Scouts, are putting up flags, garlands, and "WELCOME HOME" signs, in appropriate places.

RASMUS. (*Directing.*) Now, boys, wen I kem home, back in sixty, from the war, dere were a big banner stretched 'cross the street sayin' "WELCOME HOME." Now, I jess like to have the boys wat are comin' home to-day to be met wid de same greetin'. (*Produces Welcome Home banner.*) Now youse jes fasten one end ob de rope to one side an' de odder end to de odder side. (*Stretch banner across stage and fasten to wings.*) So, dat am it. Now don't forget the flag, boys. (*Stretch flag behind banner in same manner.*)

HIRAM. (*As he tacks small flag to front of store, strikes his thumb with hammer, shouts and dances around.*) O me, O my, now, but that hurts some. Ouch!

RASMUS. Wat am de matter, Jenkins, habs youse struck de nail on de head dat time? (*Laughter.*) Youse am got ter be mighty careful.

HIRAM. Gee, whiz, but it hurts.

RASMUS. Well, youse better stop nailin' den.

HIRAM. Guess I will. (*Sits down, nursing finger.*)

RASMUS. There, now, I'se tink that ebry thing am lovely and we will gib de boys as grand a reception jess as we got back in de sixties. Now then, boys, fall in line. We'll march down to de depo' an' meet de train as she pulls in, an' escort dem right up here, an' Mr. Jenkins, who am de 'onery chairman ob de comite, will make de welcome speech. (*Scouts fall in line.*) Comp'ny 'tention! Forward, march! (*Rasmus leading, Scouts march around stage, then off, right.*)

HIRAM. (*Rises, shaking arm.*) Gee-will-i-kens, but that does hurt some. Guess I'll go inside and put some arnica on it. (*Off.*)

SIDNEY. (*With Dick, comes from right, says disgustedly:*) So we've come to the end of our rope at last. In a short time Truman will be back again, hailed by the people as the hero that he is, and then—what will become of us? I see the jail staring us in the face.

DICK. (*Carelessly.*) O nonsense, Sidney, if there is any jail in sight, Truman will be the occupant, not you or me. I have laid my plans too well for that.

SIDNEY. But, surely, you do not intend to fasten our crime on Truman?

DICK. (*Deliberately.*) That is just exactly what I intend to do, and without any loss of time. Listen, Sidney, his own actions will convict. In the first place, the alterations in the ledger, made by us, will have to be explained by him. Next, the thousand dollars extracted from the safe will have to be accounted for. This will be a hard nut for Truman to crack, for I've since found out that on the day of his enlistment he deposited just exactly one thousand dollars in the savings bank. Do you get me? See how easy it will be to fasten the guilt on him?

SIDNEY. (*Scornfully.*) Dick, you are a monster, a devil in disguise. O why did I ever listen to you and go into this damnable business?



DICK. (*Sneeringly.*) O well, it's tool late now. All the reproach and regret won't put back that thousand in your dad's safe. You know that the accountant who is now examining the books in the office found the false entry, and—

SIDNEY. I know it, and you mean to cover up our rascality and put it up to Truman.

DICK. That's it exactly, unless you want to bear the brunt of it (*harshly*), or, do you intend to put it up to me? Look here, Sidney, I know that it is dirty work, but I have my own hide to protect. I've done it to save you, and I'll not be made the scapegoat, understand me?

ASHLEY. (*Enters hastily.*) I've been looking for both of you. I just learned from Mr. Peabody, the accountant, that there is a shortage and falsification of one thousand dollars on the books. Have you any knowledge of this, Sidney?

SIDNEY. (*Hesitating.*) Why, no—father. I know nothing further except that Mr. Peabody called my attention to it.

ASHLEY. Very well. And how about you, Darrell? Outside of my son, you and Truman Sanders are the only persons who have had access to the books.

DICK. (*Confused.*) Why—er—Mr. Peabody informed me of the case, and Sidney and I were just discussing the matter as you came in.

ASHLEY. Very well, then; I will question Truman as soon as he arrives.

DICK. I have been telling Sidney that I learned from good authority that Truman had deposited one thousand dollars in the savings bank on the day of his enlistment. It may be only a coincidence (*faltering*), but then—Truman also had charge of the ledger up to that time an—

ASHLEY. Well, what is your conclusion?

DICK. I dare not express any: that is for you to say.

ASHLEY. You will both report to the office at once. I will be there directly. (*Sidney and Dick, off.*) A remarkable coincidence. Can it be possible that Truman should prove to be the culprit? I cannot believe it, yet it looks suspicious. I will go to the bank and investigate. (*Off.*)

(*Ray and Mason, dressed in Scout suits, enter from opposite sides of stage, each carrying a large placard marked respectively, "Welcome to Our Heroes" and "Show Your Colors." They strut proudly across the stage and, meeting in center, march forward, facing audience.*)

MASON. Wal, I'se joined de army at last.

RAY. (*Laughing.*) So have I, but my, you look gay in that uniform!

MASON. Dat I do, Ray, an' I'se proud ob it bekase you sent it to me.

RAY. O no, Mason, I coaxed daddy to buy the suit for you, and he did so.

MASON. I'se cert'nly wery tankful to your daddy and to you fo' youse kindness.

RAY. O that's all right, Mason, but how are you getting on? You certainly was sick a long time.

MASON. Yas, dat I be, so long dat I can scarce recomember anyfink. I'se want to tell somethin' 'bout youse brudder Sidney and dat Dick Darrell, but howsome-ebber I kaint recomember wat it am.

RAY. O well, don't bother your head about it. Let us go and join the welcome parade; the Scouts are down at the depot, now, and the train is near due.

MASON. All right, Ray, I'se wid you.

HIRAM. (*Coming from store, holding up thumb, bandaged with large red kerchief.*) Jumping Jupiter, but how that thumb jumps! One would think that it was hit by a trip-hammer. Wow, by gosh! (*Jumping around.*)

MASON. Wat am the matter, Marse Jenkins? Am youse practicing de Wirginia Reel?

RAY. No, Mason, that's a fox trot, that's the way they dance it up at our house.

HIRAM. You little rascals better clear out of here, and hurry along if you want to join the parade.

RAY. Very well, Mr. Jenkins, we are off. (*March off single file, whistling.*)

HIRAM. Well, this is certainly a predicament. Here I'm supposed to deliver the welcome address to the returning soldiers, all bandaged up as though I was in the war myself, and not a line prepared for my speech. Well, troubles never come singly, so I better retire and prepare my address. (*Off.*)

ASHLEY. (*With Grabber, come from left.*) Mr. Grabber, I would ask you to remain here with me, as I may have need of your services later.

GRABBER. (*Bowing.*) At your service, Mr. Ashley. What's the trouble?

ASHLEY. (*Dick and Sidney enter.*) There has been some crooked work going on at the office, with my books, and I may need you to apprehend the culprit.

GRABBER. Very well, Mr. Ashley, I'm an apprehender by profession, commonly known as a con-stuble. I'm the terror of evildoers, so I be.

SIDNEY. So you have decided to press the case against Truman, daddy?

DICK. It certainly does look black for him.

ASHLEY. (*Abruptly.*) I have decided nothing. I don't do things on impulse. I have asked Grabber to remain with me in case I need his services.

(*A long screeching whistle is heard in distance, bells are tolling, and villagers are flocking from all directions, on stage, laughing and shouting, "Here they come!" "The boys are home again." "Three cheers for our sons!" "God bless them," etc.*

(*Hiram comes from store all dressed up, frock coat, high hat, etc., holding up right hand, with thumb bandaged, and shaking hands, all around, with left hand.*)

(*Sounds of fifes and drums are gradually drawing nearer, and finally the parade appears, led by Rasmus, Mason and Ray with placards, and followed by Scouts and returning heroes, about twelve in number, with Captain Truman Sanders commanding.*) (*Service men of community may here be introduced.*)

(*Pandemonium reigns; shouts of "All hail to our heroes!" "Hurrah!" etc.; the ranks are broken, general handshaking and embracing ensues. This scene should be made as natural and effective as possible by the director.*)

(*Ashley, Sidney, Dick, and Constable stand to one side, stolid and indifferent.*)

HIRAM. (*After quiet has been restored, steps forward, saying:*) Gentlemen and Heroes, friends and sons, in the name of the inhabitants of this community, I bid you thrice welcome on your home-coming. It was with sorrow that we bade you God-speed when you left for the front, and it is with joy and gladness that we acclaim your home-coming. Although your ranks have been thinned out, and many of your comrades have made the supreme sacrifice on the foreign battle fields, nevertheless we rejoice to have you, who have come out of that terrible carnage, back with us again, and not forgetting the silent brothers who have shed their blood, not in vain, but in the glorious cause of a new "Birth of Freedom," we shed a silent tear, and pray the Almighty, that He will grant them that reward which He promised to all good and faithful servants. (*Turning to Truman.*) And as for you, Captain Sanders, we notice with pride the distinguished service medal pinned upon your breast. At the same time we notice with grief the double loss you have sustained: the sheltering arm of your dearly beloved mother, and your right arm, the arm that has never been known to do a wrong deed. Captain Sanders and Heroes, I again welcome you from the bottom of my heart, and in the name of this community.

TRUMAN. (*Stepping forward.*) Mr. Jenkins and my dear friends. On behalf of my comrades, and in my own name, we thank you sincerely, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this splendid manifestation of good will, for this hearty greeting which you have accorded us. It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure to be back in God's own country once more, to grasp the hands of our friends, to see those happy smiling faces and hear the dear, sweet voices again. (*The people in turn exchange greetings with Truman and comrades, except Ashley, Sidney, and Dick, who stand indifferently to one side.*)

TRUMAN. (*Goes up to Ashley, with outstretched hand.*) Why, my dear Mr. Ashley, I'm so glad to see you. (*Ashley turns to one side.*) Is there no word of welcome, of greeting, for me? (*Astonished.*)

ASHLEY. I owe you no answer, Mr. Sanders. You have grossly violated my confidence, and I call upon the law to take its course. Officer, arrest that man.

GRAB. (*Taps Truman on shoulder.*) You are my prisoner.

TRUMAN. (*Staggering backward.*) Prisoner? My God! Of what crime am I accused?

GRAB. Forgery and embezzlement is the charge.

TRUMAN. (*Trembling.*) Forgery? Embezzlement? Why, you must be mistaken; you are playing a cruel joke on me, Mr. Ashley. (*Ashley turns aside.*)

SIDNEY. You'll find to your sorrow that it is not a joke.

DICK. (*Sneering.*) Yes, it is quite a serious matter to rob one's employer.

TRUMAN. (*Indignant.*) What, you dare charge me with a robbery that I have never committed? What are your proofs?

DICK. O pshaw, it will be up to you to do the proving. A pretty bird, indeed.

TRUMAN. (*Appealing.*) Surely there must be a gross mistake, Mr. Ashley. You cannot, you must not, for a moment think of me as a criminal.

ASHLEY. (*Calmly.*) The evidence is against you, that's all. (*Turns to go away.*)

MASON. (*Agitated and excited, steps forward.*) One moment, Marse Ashley. Youse remember when youse picked me up in your office as I'se was near chokin' and Marse Sidney were bendin' ober me, squeezing de libe out er me, youse axes me a question, what's happened? Tell me all; don't be afraid?

SIDNEY. (*Violently pushing Mason aside.*) What insolence is this?

MASON. (*Defiantly.*) Jess you wait, Marse Sidney, I'se aint fru yet. It am all comin' back to my mind. Dere am a cloud lifted off my brain. 'Thank de Lord, I'se kin think again.

DICK. (*Gruffly grabbing Mason.*) If you don't leave here at once I'll throw you out.

MASON. No, youse won't, not while my fren', Captin' Sanders am 'round. (*Goes to Truman, who puts arm about him.*) Marse Sidney (*points finger at him*), I'se come to 'pologize agin. I'se tole youse a lie when I'se said in de office dat I'se seen an' heard nothin'. Will you tell wat happened, or shall I answer Marse Ashley's question now?

SIDNEY. (*Rushes in rage at Mason, but is pushed back by Truman.*) You black imp, you rascal, if you dare utter a word, I'll—

MASON. (*Crouching in Truman's arm.*) That's what youse said before, Marse Sidney, when you most choked the life out ob me, wid no one to help me, but Captin' Sanders, our hero, will stand by me now. I'se not afraid.

SIDNEY. (*To Dick.*) Come on, Dick, let's be off and not listen to this child's rambling any longer. He's flighty.

DICK. I should say, he's nutty.

ASHLEY. (*To Sidney and Dick, as they attempt to leave.*) Stop where you are—remain. I'll hear the lad's story. (*Sidney and Dick return, trembling and agitated.*)

MASON. (*Steps forward, speaks slowly and deliberately.*) 'Thank you, Marse Ashley, you'll not regret it. I'se went to your office, on that awful day, to 'pologize to Marse Sidney, fo' bein' obnoxious to him in de morning'. Ask Sandy, wat are standin' dere, ib I'se tellin' de truf?

SANDY. Righto, Smoke, and I fired you out.

MASON. Yas, dat am so, but I'se came back again wen youse lebt de office, an' met Captin' Sanders. Is I'se right, Captin'?

TRUMAN. Yes, Mason, I remember it very well. You asked for Mr. Sidney and said you wanted to apologize for being rude to him.

MASON. Dat am it 'xactly. An' den youse tole me dat Marse Sidney were in de private office, an' dat I could hang 'round till he come out. So I'se hided behind the safe an' Captin' Sanders went out, sayin' as he were going to 'nlist.

TRUMAN. That's the truth, Mason.

MASON. Bymby Sidney an' Dick come from de office, an' I'se hear some talk 'bout Ironsides Stockings bottom drop out, an' Marse Sidney goin' ravin' 'round like, an' Dick tells him neber mind, I'll fix up de ledger, an' I'll take a t'ousand dollars from de safe to pay for dem stockings.

DICK. You lie, you villain.

MASON. No, Dickey, I'se no liar. Youse took a bunch ob money from de safe

an' puts it in youse coat pocket an' rushes out an' Marse Sidney hollerin',
Wait, Dick; don't do it! An' he drops in a chair, cryin' like.

SIDNEY. (*Fiercely.*) Liar and scoundrel that you are.

MASON. I'se tellin' de truf now. When I spoke to you and wanted to 'pologize,
an' youse grab me by de troat an' near chokes me to dead, I tole a lie when
I'se said dat I seen an' heard nuthin. Youse, Marse Ashley, came in at dat
moment, an' seen Sidney choke me. Am I correct?

ASHLEY. (*Dejectedly.*) You are quite correct, child.

MASON. An den when I swooned away like, youse ax me to tell all?

ASHLEY. (*Slowly.*) Yes—yes.

MASON. An' Ray come in, an' I says dat Sidney and me were havin' a sparrin'
match?

RAY. Why, yes, Mason, I remember that.

MASON. An' dear Uncle Rasmus and Ray brought me home, an' den I'se remem-
ber nothin' for a long time until now, when youse 'rested Captin Sanders, it
all came back to me, like a flash out ob de clear sky. Dat am all.

TRUMAN. (*Sternly.*) As a commanding officer in the U. S. Army, I ask you,
constable, to arrest that man. (*Points to Dick.*)

DICK. (*Raging.*) Arrest me, on the evidence of that imbecile? How can you
corroborate his statements?

ASHLEY. (*Slowly.*) By inquiring at the stock brokers if you have settled for
Ironsides stocks, to the amount of one thousand dollars, on that day. (*To
Truman, crestfallen.*) I am ashamed to ask your pardon, Captain, for my
miserable action. If I could atone for it in any way, I would be the happiest
man in this assemblage.

TRUMAN. (*Taking Ashley's hand.*) My dear Mr. Ashley, to err is but human.
Now that we have discovered the true culprit, let us forget the incident, and
join in the festivities. I harbor no animosity towards you, and have only the
profoundest compassion for your son, Sidney. He was misled by that ras-
cally Dick Darrell, and has brought shame and sorrow upon you. I hope
that you will forgive him as cheerfully as I do. He has learned a lesson, and
no doubt will profit by it in the future and become a manly man once more.

ASHLEY. Captain Sanders, your words come as a sweet balm to my wounded
heart. I will ever cherish them. And you, my dear friends, who have borne
witness to my impetuosity, I ask your pardon. (*To Mason.*) And you,
my dear little lad, you have lifted the dark cloud which has been hovering
over us. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I promise you that I will
take care of your future, as I would of that of my own child, Ray.

MASON. O dat am all right, Marse Ashley, as long as Ray and me can remain
frens, I'se happy.

RAY. (*Rushes up to Mason, hugging him.*) And I'm so happy, too.

MASON. So's I, but please don't crumble up my new suit like that. (*Laughs.*)

HIRAM. (*Steps forward.*) And now that this trouble is settled and over, let us
resume our festivities, in honor of our heroes, and above all, let us not forget
on this memorable occasion the words of good old Abe Lincoln, "We here
resolve that our dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God,
shall have a new birth of freedom."

RASMUS. Yas, it am come again. "The Birth of Freedom" of sixty-five am re-
peatin' itself in nineteen-nineteen, God protect it.

HIRAM. And in conclusion, let us listen to the words of our illustrious President,
Woodrow Wilson: "The day has come when America is privileged to spend
her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness
and the peace she has treasured." (*All shouting.*) Hurrah, for the "Birth
of Freedom"!

RASMUS. (*Commanding.*) Comp'ny 'tention! All fall in. Forward, March!
(*All fall in line, marching off stage, singing the refrain, "March On." At the
end of line, the constable is leading Dick off, and the curtain descends slowly.*)

FINIS.

SYNOPSIS OF PLAY

As the scene opens, Uncle Rasmus, led by Mason, is on his way to deliver the mail, from station, to the postmaster. Sidney demands that the mail for his father shall be turned over to him. Rasmus refuses to do so, and Mason asserts his rights, to the discomfort of Sidney. Hiram finally settles the dispute. Ray, the younger brother of Sidney, appears and makes friends with Rasmus and Mason, to the consternation of Sidney. The Boy Scouts appear, to drill under the direction of Uncle Rasmus, a veteran of the Civil War, when Hiram announces that war has been declared, and commands the Scouts to make known the news throughout the village. This they do after taking the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and, to the strains of the Star-Spangled Banner, the curtain descends.

In the second act we are introduced to Sandy, a typical office boy. He endeavors to run the Ashley office according to his own ideas, but comes to grief. Mason appears to apologize to Sidney for his rudeness, and butts up against Sandy, coming out best. Truman arrives at the office, welcomed by Sidney and Dick, and a heated argument ensues as to the relative merits of war, and Truman announces that he is ready to enlist as soon as war is declared, challenging Dick, who has been nagging him, to do likewise. Dick is furious at the imputation and is about to start Truman, when Ashley appears and quells the disturbance. Sidney and Dick have been gambling in stocks which, as war has been declared, have become worthless, so Dick concocts a scheme to forge Truman's entries in the ledger during his absence at the front and abstract a sum of money from the safe and thus cast the odium on Truman. Mason, who calls again to apologize to Sidney, however, is an innocent witness to the plot, and on being discovered by Sidney is driven by him almost into insensibility, but is rescued by Ashley and Ray, who come to his aid.

In the first scene of the third act, the recruiting officer is busy enlisting men for the war, Truman being the first to enlist. Rasmus and Ray bring Mason home, suffering with a fever, and Mason's mind becomes a blank. The recruits are leaving for camp singing "God Save Our Country," and receive an ovation on their departure.

In the second scene, elaborate preparations are under way to receive the home-coming of Captain Truman Sanders has received the distinguished service medal, and has not only lived through the arm in battle, but also his mother, who died during his absence. An enthusiastic reception is given the boys, with Hiram delivering an oration. Ashley refuses to recognize Truman as a hero, and causes his arrest for forgery and embezzlement at the behest of Sidney and Dick, who are the guilty ones, and endeavor to put the crime on Truman. The plot is, however, frustrated by Mason, who recovers his memory, and recounts the incidents of the robbery, as witnessed by him. Truman is released and Dick is arrested in his stead, and the play comes to a close with innocence triumphant, and "The Birth of Freedom" established for all time.

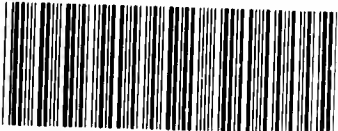
ANNOUNCEMENT

In submitting this play for your consideration, the author feels that he has chosen a timely subject, coupled with an interesting plot, and abounding with thrilling climaxes and humorous incidents. It was written at the earnest solicitation of his numerous friends, who have found his juvenile plays of the past to meet with their approval. It should make an attractive and pleasing number for your forthcoming commencement program.

A. J. SCHINDLER.

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"For God And Our Country"

Con spiritoso.

Piano.



Re spond-ing to our Coun-try's call,
Tho' far 'from home and friends so dear,

We an-swer read-y one and all;
There's One who watch-es ev-er near;

To —
As we



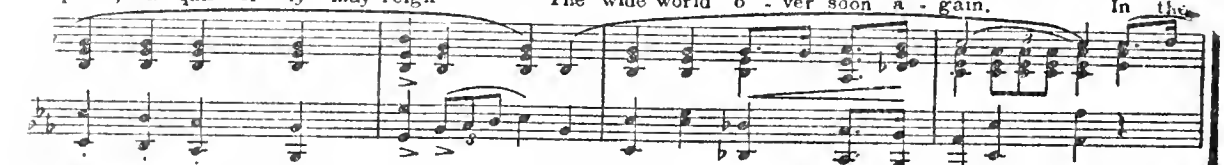
fight for jus-tice and hu-man-i-ty, For — free-dom right-eous-ness and lib-er-ty. No
face the foe with shot and shell a-round, And — say a pray'r that we may hold our ground. That



mal-ice, ha-tred, scorn or greed,
peace, tran-quil-li-ty may reign

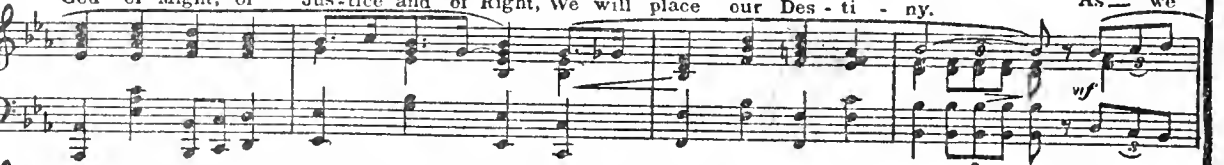
Im-pels our hearts to val-i-ant deed.
The wide world o-ver soon a-gain.

We are
In the



bat-ting for our flag o'er land and sea, For the World's De-moc-ra-cy.
God of Might, of Jus-tice and of Right, We will place our Des-ti-ny.

As — we



march a - long

Stout of heart, full of hope, ne'er flinch-ing, With glad-some song,


And with



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